The Value of Religious Facts

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THE VALUE OF RELIGIOUS FACTS

A STUDY OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

BY

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CHAPTER I

THE MATERIALS

THE results of the science of religion have been confusing and contradictory, chiefly, perhaps, because the method and object of the researches have been different. One group of scholars has investigated what they deemed religion, meaning thereby the various cults, standards of life, and usages which have prevailed in the past, or prevail to-day, in greater or smaller communities. Such, for example, are Mr. Grant Allen's valuable descriptions

of sacred stakes, and of corpse worship. Another group, well represented by Biedermann, from the other extreme point of view, abstract the common elements of the psychological conception of religion, and treat religion as the subjective attitude of persons who are members of a common social life.

The method of the first is high in favor at the present day. Following in the way of the natural sciences its course seems clear; the science of religion is to build itself upon research and experiment. Its first task is to ascertain the common traits of those phenomena which are grouped under the term "religion." Nothing could be more simple. One forms by induction a general conception from definite cases and the result is a clear definition and a deeper insight.

The second method is an inductive analysis and methodical rearrangement of that which distinguishes religion from the other facts of the inner life.

How far may these two methods, the historical and the philosophical, be made to assist, and not to bewilder each other? In the labyrinth of the changing and the intricately interwoven religions of history can a common element with the subjective religious faith of to-day be found? Is there one force which causes both? Is there a normal religion with normal religious experiences and standards of living, and is there a normal religious faith?

To begin with the last question, the method is inductive, and the historical religions are the object of the experiment.

If we try to understand a definite historical form of religion, for ex-

ample the Egyptian religion, or the Christian religion in the form of the Greek Catholic Church, we turn to funeral inscriptions, ritual papyri, and to sculpture, or to catechisms, hymns, and books of devotion. Here is a mass of ideas in concrete form, a collection of definite statements about God, world, and men; in addition, certain rules for will and deed toward God and men; finally, in the ceremonies of worship, rules for certain deeds directly to God alone.

For contemporary religion this material is especially fertile because of its stability; for religions of the past, with the exception of ritual survivals, we have scarcely any other authoritative material except in this written or artistic form. The confidence that one may really understand a religion from its authoritative books is increased by

the fact that adherents of later developments of the same or of allied religions use them in religious education.

And still if we are in any true sense to understand historical religion, we cannot be satisfied with a complex of ideas or of rules, but must to some degree feel its subjective faith. A religion lives as far only as it is felt by living subjects. If we speak with any accuracy of a religion like the Vedic, which has no surviving worshipper, whose sacred writings, however, lie before us, it is only because they help us to reconstruct for our imagination the emotions and the will-acts of the living men and women who ladled out the soma and preserved the sacred flame. The writings meant nothing to those persons except in so far as they aroused conviction of the truth of their teachings about life and man and the

gods, so far as they subjected the wills in daily life and in sacred cults, and sustained a certain emotional tone. This mass of written rules and ideas was of course in use for the propagation of the faith; but the immediate transference from one individual life to another within the religious communion of conviction, of expressions of willing obedience, of personal feelings, and of all varieties of mental habits, was a far more effective means of extending the faith. And this expression of deepest religious moods took place often in connection with the written tradition, far more often quite independently of it. Any research into a religion must find the value of these convictions of truth, these attitudes of will, these fluctuating shades of emotion. And the experiment will succeed only when the motives for these states of mind are

made clear to one's own self as a real, willing subject.

The object of research, then, in any historical religion is, in the last analysis, the complex of peculiar phenomena of consciousness of the members of that particular religion.

This launches us into incredible difficulties. The multitude of objects is countless; the number of the different religions which exist or no longer exist is sufficiently large, but the peculiar psychic states of the members of these religions even when contemporary were by no means the same, and in the course of time passed through a series of crises. The prevailing moods and motives of a Christian of the fourth century were remote from one of the beginning of the second.

Still the number of cases is not the difficulty so much as the methods of

investigation. And this is the difficulty of all science of historical human life, especially of morals, of æsthetical habits, and of religion.

What is the method of natural science? Given objects are exactly arranged in relations of quantity and quality and in causal relations. Any other attitude than that of an unprejudiced spectator who analyzes and measures, any attempt to penetrate into an inner meaning of the material, is unscientific and ridiculous.

For the historian, however, the inner lives of men are not merely outer objects, but an object that must in some degree be reconstructed out of his own personal feelings. The historian may actually experience the same feelings which the given historical persons felt, or he may imagine these feelings, and there is no necessity to live through

the experience in order to understand. We can put ourselves at the point of view of the Mohammedan without becoming Moslems. We construct within ourselves a hypothetical experience such as he would feel in the worship of Allah. This hypothetical worship may be described by analogy.

Before a definite will-act committing us to a course of conduct, a period of deliberation occurs during which we construct for ourselves a hypothetical experience, and discover how we are likely to feel about it by experiencing in imagination the attitude we should take towards it. We anticipate reactions of pleasure or of pain, as if the imagined experience were actually arousing the emotions and the feelings of effort which make up our self. Likewise we can live ourselves into the feelings of others, and especially into

such psychical states as have been active in men in history, in the form, it may be, of a religious life remote from our own. As a concrete example: we can place ourselves in a mood in which Apollo seems to be advancing to the twin heights of Parnassus. The god of the golden hair is as clear to us as daylight, the embodiment of the brightness of the Greek atmosphere and of all that was brilliant and joyous and lofty in the Greek mind. We love to dwell upon the thought. We enter into it. There are the laurel leaves upon the brow, the lyre, and the lips curling with scorn of all that is vulgar. We wonder, we give thanks, and, if we are only Greeks, we cry out that he will save us and guard our homes from woe, and be favorable to us, and crown our city with the honors of the games.

This is hypothetical worship, lacking the conviction of the reality of what we have seen, lacking in impulses which govern our course of action, lacking in the kind of pleasure which experiences of reality bring home to ourselves.

Have we, then, the means to reconstruct the religious situations of others as they themselves experienced them ? We have descriptions of ideas, especially conceptions of gods, we have descriptions of certain religious acts, and, less often, descriptions of the motives and the moods which accompany these ideas and acts. These last lie before us in all degrees of development, from the unconscious expressions of jubilant trust and gratitude in the Delphic hymns to Apollo to the intricate reflection of the Psalms and of religious autobiographies. If we take simple concrete experiences with little or no

analysis of feelings bound up with them, the mere mention of the facts arouses sympathetic impulses in us. We can successfully imagine the psychic condition of one who cries for deliverance from marauders, from famine, from loss by fire or by death, of one who bursts out into thanks for bright skies, for harvests, for victory, for a just verdict against tyrants. Our imagination feasts upon the details. The single images group themselves into a picture. Unconsciously we have taken attitude with the strange creatures whose lives are so distant from us. Similarly, passionate expressions of sadness or exultation, of indignation or hope, betray to us inner processes with which we are almost daily familiar. Out of our own life we vitalize the written record.

But we are not limited to a slavish

repetition of the experiences suggested in the texts. As we repeat in ourselves the scene of joy or of depression, and the feelings which are bound up with it, our own will-attitude crystallizes about the material, and we compare ours with that of the totemist or the bacchanal or the Buddhist, as the case may be. We try to decide whether this attitude which we have developed in ourselves adjusts itself to the other, whether there is any hint of it there, whether it is not necessary by inference to complete the gaps in the text. We assume that we are doing our utmost to sympathize. When this is impossible, we are obliged to interpolate our feelings in order to understand.

This, then, is the task: to reproduce, as if real to us, all the ideas which compose the mental picture present to the stranger, to repeat in our own im-

agination all the feelings or will-attitudes which were bound up with this experience.

Out of all this attitude, a mood, made up of the trust, the hope, the indignation, and the gladness, or whatever else, is formed. During the process we acquire a keen sense of difference between our own real attitude and that which we are trying to imitate. As the distinctions are becoming clear to us, we ask half unconsciously whether this motive, this tone, is known to our individual religious life. In proportion as this comparison is searching, our own point of view will be much more definite and the other will begin to be understood. Real contrast with new material gives to ourselves a firmer poise and gives to it the freshness of life.

Not for a moment is the need of dis-

passionate historical research forgotten. This most exact work is indispensable. Without collection of traditions, editing of texts, chronology, comparison of sources, any hope for a scientific result is folly. But upon this material the method of imagined repetition of the experience must be built up, if any new religious insight is to be required. This has been accomplished in the most rigorous manner by Mr. Jevons, by Professor Oldenberg, Professor Tiele, and, earlier, by Robertson Smith. Progress in history of religion at the present is due not merely to the discovery of papyri and inscribed bricks and other masses of unexpected documents, but quite as much to the newly acquired skill in imagining ourselves on the spot even with prehistoric savages. And this we owe very probably to the poets and the romantic school.

The possibility of error is unavoidable. First, in enlivening the historical data we discover the limitations of our method. In the definition of physical objects we have a right to expect a high degree of precision on account of the relative stability of the material; in the description of psychical life, since our view of life is estranged from that of other men, especially those of ancient time, security cannot be expected. Likewise, the interpolation of feeling into defective descriptions of religious life is hazardous by reason of the individual character of psychic life. A contradiction apparent to another may not be plain to me. In the same way, with regard to comparison of our own and other religious attitudes, the tendency to distinguish our own, or the tendency to discover resemblances to our own in countless other forms of

worship may either be excessive, or our own attitude may change and our conception of other beliefs would also be in danger of change.

There is, then, no absolute certainty that we can reproduce religious sentiment. One may reduce the chances of error by approaching the subject from as many different sides as possible, from many different moods, and with more perfect comprehension of the state of civilization, of the habits of life, and of the peculiar experiences of the given case. And gradually one may compare religions and discover in what degree they agree with one's own.

Before, however, a discussion of this kind may be begun with any hope of a result, we must consider the whole question: whether we have any right to assume that religion is an independent activity, or merely a variation of some

other form of human life; whether it is different in kind, touching other activities but never included in them, or, rather, a species of morals, or of art, or of logic, or of any other distinct province of life. This brings us very close, first, to the facts of psychology, and, later, to the facts of history.

CHAPTER II

THE FACTS OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE very statement of the question, whether religion is a unique fact, in the closest connection with all the rest of human life, or subject to its own laws and relatively independent of all other departments of life, arouses numberless difficulties.

There can be no doubt where the concentration of difficulties lies. As the whole argument has implied, the problem is one of the psychology of religion and of the history of religion. The first examines the existence, the origin, and the significance of religion in human consciousness. The latter

gives us the material and searches for the connection between the isolated historical facts.

The task of religious psychology is no longer abstract and individual but historical and social. The field of view has widened enormously. The most heterogeneous and rudimentary religious states, the least developed rites and social forms, are eagerly tested.

The psychology of individual states, —of desire, of intention, of reflection, of resolve, of emotions of joy and grief, hope and expectation, of memory and of imagination; of the relations between states, such as attention and vividness of idea, reflection and feeling; and of the changes of personality and of abnormal states,—all this is certainly of the greatest aid to religious psychology. But it is the psychology of the social life,—of the psychic proc-

esses of sympathy and aversion, envy, hatred, reverence, generosity, of friendship and trust,—which has a direct bearing. Just as there is a psychology of jurisprudence, of economics, of art, and of morals, so there is a psychology of religion.

Such a psychology analyzes the given psychic conditions, and the result is clean-cut descriptions of how, for example, motives group with certain intentions, and certain emotions with certain ideas; but an abstract construction of a religion out of psychological elements is mythological. Good psychology may be made out of a religion, but no religion was ever patched together out of discoveries of a laboratory.

If we strip off all metaphysics and all prejudice for or against and apply a rigorous psychological method to a re-

ligious consciousness, the result of the analysis is the same for this as for any other psychical experience,—a mass of ideas bound up with feelings from which manifold voluntary impulses spring. An idea, however simple, is always the starting-point, accompanied by feelings and ambitions which react upon the idea. The religions are complicated forms of these same elements. In all forms of real consciousness we find the simple sensations, with feelings of pleasure and pain, and will-attitudes, developing into countless complications. From these elements the conscious life is built. The sensations are connected in complex conceptions, the feelings and will-impulses develop into permanent dispositions and characters.

Intellect and will, the ability to be aware of objects, and the ability to react upon these objects with feelings

and impulses, are, then, the elements of religion, and they are always found together. Religions are complicated forms of ideas with intricate emotions and volitions. The content of these ideas may be enormously different, and the emotions and volitions endless in variety.

But there is a constant element. And this remains. This idea is always of superhuman realities to which reverence is due, and these ideas, accompanied by powerful emotions, result in actions, in ceremonies, in social usages, or in morality. By traditions, by custom, by expanding authority, this psychical complex rules groups of human beings and crystallizes in social organizations.

The question naturally arises, whence is this idea and these accompanying states of mind? A deeper knowledge

of the inner structure of life is necessary, if one is to fix more definitely the seat of the religious experience. Not that there are faculties, or powers, or any such abstractions. It is the whole soul that is active, but active on different material and with different relations of the functions which combine into the attitude of will.

In the first place, then, the religious experience is not the co-ordinating functions which are always more or less active, even, very probably, subconscious states. These activities are by no means the same as the actual contents of the soul. The most important of these are the logical connection of ideas, according to the laws of contradiction and of sufficient reason, and the associative connection of ideas in memory and imagination.

Logic arranges the given material,

but never produces the contents of consciousness. In all its forms the constant element is the strife for the feeling that certain contents belong together, the strife for consistency and unity.

But since the material of logic is an exceedingly small section of the whole of reality, and since even this material is restless in movement and transformation, the logical activity never comes to the complete whole and never comes to rest.

In spite of this the struggle for unity persists. One who clings to isolated facts or to certain keen impressions without effort to compare them with other facts or feelings is condemned as a narrow thinker or a sentimentalist. Another, who will not face details, but rushes to conclusions for the sake of generalizations, is one-sidedly intellec-

tual. Thought is productive when it is compelled to postulate a higher unity, not given directly in experience, which will include the single, isolated items of concrete life. These postulates are empirically verifiable or stand in permanent relation to some one of the great meanings of life. Thus the religious idea has often been analyzed as the result of a similar postulate, as the impulse to assume a single cause of reality.

As a matter of fact, no known religion has arisen in this manner. Religion is what it is, not because it satisfies logical postulates, but because of its own peculiar value, and its close connection with all the ideal significance of reality, with the higher emotions, and with the sense of an infinite reality higher than what is human.

All the geniuses of religious history

have troubled themselves precious little about unity and sufficient reason. They have lived in an immediate experience, and in indifference to such problems.

Naturally the religious idea, when once actually presented, satisfies the need of a cause, or promises a final satisfaction. But it is incredible that the bare idea of a cause could generate a great religion or could even furnish the germ of more than a temporary and provisional individual religious mood. Logical thinking is important enough for a conception of reality and for a conception of religious life, but it is never its origin.

It is a law of associative memory that a feeling which has been aroused by a certain cause may call forth a similar or contrasted idea or one merely accidental connected with it, which it has

as its occasion. Thirst recalls the idea of the last refreshing drink. An enormous part of the inner life runs on in this way, dreaming, hoping, or dreading —ideas which correspond to no reality. Religion has been explained as the idea of a force similar to, but more effective than, human powers, which can free us from evils, as one man helps another. The awakening of all varieties of feeling of the need of such a Power could only intensify and extend the idea.

This attempt at explanation which brings religion into the closest intimacy with the emotional life of man, and therefore nearer to his real self, is certainly much less inaccurate than the previous attempt.

All that need be stated here is, that the statements of all genuine religions about themselves completely contra-

dict this theory. Possibly in the most primitive forms it may be valid. But their origin eludes historical research. The question now is whether, according to those who speak of what they experience, religion is one of the immediate and most real contents of the inner life.

Another explanation of religion by the laws of association deserves attention. The imagination is not only the stream of all sorts of associated presentations, but also the expression of the ideal significance of experience to the will in certain perceptible impressions and forms. All human thinking, speaking, and acting is bound up with these sensuous forms, and in connection with such forms only is there any experience at all.

Thus the picture, which has served as a medium in which the meaning was

expressed, or which possesses some kind of affinity with the meaning, becomes the invariable implement to represent, to reawaken, or to communicate these ideal experiences.

Art and poetry, beside the æsthetic pleasure of their form, express ideal meaning which is otherwise inexpressible; and these forms become the mightiest means of the education of the will. The most abstract language of metaphysics betrays the childish metaphor of the primitive symbolic speech of the imagination.

Likewise religion is bound up with images and media, which have some kind of analogy with the ideal religious experience, or suggest it to the inner life; and these are so inextricably bound up with this inner experience that they become indispensable symbols of religious speech and imagina-

tions. Heaven, Creation, Light, Lord are poetical terms, but to a developed religious nature symbols of inner facts independent of any æsthetic insight.

The religious idea, then, is not the result of these co-ordinating activities.

The contents of the soul, in contrast to the activities which have the character of immediacy are of two classes: one of percepts and presentations, the other of an ideal world.

The first, the world of visible, sounding, impenetrable bodily things which our senses present to us, the other, that which gives a significance and calm to the inner life, and to the outer world, forms, purposes, and values of beauty, of goodness, of truth and of holiness. The latter exist only in connection with the former in origin and result, but are clearly distinguishable from it and independent of it.

If we distinguish the contents of the soul into two different kinds of reality, we may distinguish the psychic activities into perception and feeling. Towards the outer world of objects the activity appears as perception and sensuous emotion. On account of the constancy and clearness of the conception, and on account of the lack of interest on the part of the deeper nature of the personality, the emotional reaction is insignificant, easily separated from the object, and diminishes to a mere care for accuracy of perception or even of total indifference. The object is comparatively separable from the real self.

In the inner life of perceptions of ideal realities and of ideal feelings of values with the corresponding voluntary impulses, the element separable from the subject is small. We have

here to do not with a world, incomprehensible, easily detached from the self, foreign to the innermost nature, but with a world affirming itself, immediately perceptible, comprising all that gives meaning and consistency to life.

Hence we find these values, in spite of their universality and necessity, everywhere in the closest relation to the individual person, in the most deeply rooted intimacy with the passions, in dependence upon the will, which gathers itself together and moulds itself, and subjects itself to their ideal authority, if they are permanently to master the character distracted in the ever-varying world of the senses. Hence the indistinctness and dissimilarity of the ideal values in comparison with the distinctness and similarity of the sensuous perceptions.

The connection of this knowledge

of ideals with the will which subjects itself to moral commands has the further consequence that its higher forms can grow only with the moral development of the race and with the gradual moral gain of individuals. The perception of the sensuous world, on the contrary, is always, at least in principle, the same. The concept of the tree permits a far less degree of development than the idea of truth or of love.

Therefore the attempt has been made by some apologists of the ideal world to denote this more definite and stable mass of perceptions as the practical side of life or as the world of judgments of value, and as such to separate it from the world of ideals. But thereby the false assumption is made that practical perceptions of value need not be related to an ideal,

and that this world of ideals may be arbitrarily secluded. On the contrary, any attempt at a standard demands that different concrete cases find their right relation to each other and to the other facts of reality. As a matter of fact, it is true, these different individual cases of judgment, since they belong to different levels in the scale, are often in violent conflict with each other, and likewise with the more or less accurate knowledge of the facts of history or of nature. But the difference between the different kinds of knowledge is of importance. In the purely sensuous sphere mental presentations may be almost completely severed from their emotional accompaniment; they rest their evidence upon their constancy and clearness apart from any subjective feeling. But ideals may never be severed from

accompanying feelings of value and stimulations of the will, and they base their evidence not upon their mere presence in the mind, but, far more, upon their power upon the inner life, a power to which one must subject one's self unless the germs of the ideal are to wither away.

Their indispensability for the practical life and their positive effect upon the whole mental life are a part of their evidence, and the basis for the measurement of their value. Certainty for the reality of the sensuous world is easy to attain in comparison with the certainty for the reality of the ideal worth which must be slowly wrought out in personal experience.

But, in the first case, we have to do with a kind of reality foreign to us, and impenetrable; in the other with one immediately comprehensible to one's

own life. The question of the relation of these two forms of reality to the total reality, of the relation of the two to each other, and of the relation of the laws of causality in the first to the ideal motivation of the will, all lead us astray from the issue, which is,—that religion, in accordance with its own testimony, takes its place in the second, the ideal, and non-sensuous world, and shows all the peculiarities of this kind of knowledge. Like ethics, logic, and æsthetics, science of religion deals with the ideal life as its material.

But the chief difficulty is to distinguish the religious intuition from the moral and the æsthetic. These two depend upon rules and laws, which are immanent as such in the mind in their human form. But religion, at least religion of daily life, depends upon something distinct from a mental habit

of action, upon something complete in itself and " personal," which is above the individual, and the laws of which are merely modes of its own activity.

It is clear that such a belief arouses difficulties which do not beset the belief in the existence of such rules, or the belief which limits knowledge to the concrete and immediate experience. Moral and æsthetic laws may be recognized, fragmentarily at least, in actual control of reality and be felt as part of the very nature of the inner life ; the religious principle is never expressed as such in the reality and is usually dressed in such fantastic forms that it often can scarcely be felt as a simple fact of the soul's life.

The moral and logical in some shape are deeply rooted in the very nature of human minds, whether in actual control or not; to these the individual is

indifferent. The religious is a personal relation, felt in his own way by each. The former may be thought as infinite and superhuman, or as belonging to the nature of the human mind; the latter seems at every attempt to insist upon its infinity, to be involved in contradictions and to have entered into men by some kind of sorcery.

But throughout, religion insists upon its own right to live, in spite of metaphysical entanglements. The consequence is that religion is diminished to a belief in moral or æsthetic laws.

The religious belief in an infinite and ideal significance of reality is interpreted as having its germ in the experience of these laws. Plenty of the most recent idealists, most distinctly Rauwenhoff, and even Wundt, tend to this point of view. As such men believe, elements of truth in the actual

religions ought to develop into the normal religion. The explanation of the origin of the historical religions would be that man has heretofore been bound to natural sensuous likenesses and pictures to express the ideal meaning of the world; and that he has been able to grasp the unity of mind in the anthropomorphic or conceptual form only. The primitive, and even the world religions, have their basis in a certain crudeness and sensuousness of conception; they express inadequately in the individual the content of the one mind.

This explanation certainly explains a part only of the whole case. The religions certainly contain more than a sensualizing of the ideal reason. They cling to the idea of a Being who is not coterminous with human being. They insist that there is communion

with an ideal world, that an elevation of the finite human life is possible only when such an ideal world is accessible to the prayers, the hopes, and the efforts of men.

Another form of this same explanation is practical: man needs to express the ideal meaning of his life, in fact, all significance and purpose in his life, not in dead, abstract laws, but as living personal powers who themselves guarantee that life has a meaning, who are able to overcome the painful discrepancy between the conditions of the individual and his ideal, who are willing to protect him in the struggle of life and from the brutality of nature. Hence gods are the personified ideals of the human mind.

These explanations abolish the specifically religious, and substitute a belief in the ideal order of the world, a belief

only, since the ideal order is never known to be in full control of reality. This belief certainly has close relationship with religious faith, but only when this order actually rules men and the world about them, and becomes the supreme law and the significance of the total reality of which man is a mere fragment.

If this is so, this point of view is scarcely more than an extremely attenuated religion. It is impossible to conceive of an all-embracing thought without a thinking subject. As a matter of fact, all that is here accomplished is for logical reasons to put an end to the contradictions of the ordinary theistic conception of God; but the religious impulse restores the moral and æsthetic orders, in so far as they control life, to a position where in some way they continue independent of itself, dominat-

ing it, existing for themselves, even if not anthropomorphically imaged; and nothing restrains us from lifting up ourselves into the presence of this Supreme Life with longings and hopes, with humility and admiration, although no express petition be put into words.

This makes it plain that the belief in the existence of these laws is intimately related to religious faith and rooted in it, but that this faith always contains a supplement to these. And this is the relation to an infinite Power, or, from a human scale, endless Power. In dependence upon this Power lies the practical character of religion as a ceaseless effort to attain the highest good from it.

That religion is different from such a moral or æsthetic faith becomes clear in view of the fact that any lasting connection between them is not to be

found except in the highest levels of the great religions.

In the lower religions religious faith is neutral with regard to both. No analysis discovers in these religions a permanent relation to the good or beautiful, or, when present, they are never characteristic of the faith. There is, however, constantly present a relation to a higher Power, in whose hands lies safety or destruction, to whose life our feeble life is bound.

The result then is that religion, as a matter of fact, is always more than an experience of ideal laws, and that it constantly maintains its relation to a superhuman form of being in whom the meaning and the fate of our life lies.

Is this assertion one worthy of belief or is it a self-deception ? In case religious faith is held to be a form of belief in the ideal reason of an absolute

consciousness, the explanation that religion is an illusion could not be given.

But when this faith is reduced to the conviction that the highest ideals of the human race exist in men only, then, certainly, religion must be explained as illusion. The ideal world must be explained as a product of the mind, which grows up out of its experience, and the ideal must be reduced to the trust in a collective welfare which guarantees the welfare of the individual. Religion, the belief in a power which contains these ideals in itself, which makes them effective in the world of men, which thereby cares for men, is from this point of view an illusion. And the explanation of this illusion lies in the characteristic mark of religion, the belief in higher powers and in the hope of help from them. Just that which men have sought for themselves and ought to work out for

themselves, religion assumes to be the reality controlling the world, a power accessible to men. The inextinguishable desire for the realization of human purposes is the origin of the religious idea, with all that it includes, and the difference between religions is explained as the difference between human needs and ideals. The religious idea would then be a complex of primitive theories of nature and of imaginary ideals stimulated by feelings of dissatisfaction and pain.

This theory certainly touches the nerve of religions, their practical character. Whoever has felt the force of the difficulties with regard to the conception of God, and its clash with the brutal facts of actual life, will be attracted to it.

But how deep its implications cut. The whole psychology of religion is

reversed. The religious idea becomes the result of violent emotions and causal inferences, instead of the source of the highest human hopes and intuitions. Any one capable of reflection must require very cogent reasons for such a reversal. No serious thinker, however, maintains that religion has its origin in wishes exclusively. A purely arbitrarily wished form would last but a short time. There must have been the idea of a power to which the cravings and desires could attach themselves.

Such an idea is said to have been the personified animistic or mythological view of nature, or the worship of ghosts and of ancestors. But nothing very definite can be said about these origins; no concrete cases are cited. Still, whatever the origin may have been, we have, it is asserted, in this un-

conscious personification, the idea, to which the religions need has attached itself, and we have in these crude ideas the beginning of the development of the traditional belief in God.

But these primitive ideas have long since vanished before a more exact knowledge of nature, or, at least, in the higher religions, become insignificant. If now religion, in spite of this destruction of its object, has endured, the reason can be this only, that in the growth of religion, the peculiar causal thinking which constructs these ideas continues, or the emotions and satisfactions which were caused by the primitive religious idea, have led to unconscious transformations of the idea of the gods.

The first, the explanation by causal thinking, is not in accordance with the facts; or, if it does occur, it is only

secondarily so. Usually it occurs as a proof of what already exists.

The second, the explanation by transformation of the idea, must then be the case. Religion would owe its maintenance, if not its origin, to feelings of need. The needs would cling to the traditional objective religious forms; and these would adapt themselves to change of circumstance. But is even this explanation probable ?

The actual influence of the idea of God, apart from its influence upon a few philosophers and more or less isolated individuals, is very solid, and can scarcely be explained to-day as a mere after-effect of animistic thinking and of the restoration or transformation of what remains of this thinking by vigorous wishes.

Is it not simpler to assume that in the beginning of religious ideas some-

thing more came into play than the bare childishness of the primitive view of nature, and that this other, with the same involuntary necessity, is still effective in religious ideas? Or else to meet the theory half way, by admitting in all religious ideas a permanent and ever intensifying element which would be the involuntary assumption of some kind of a causal power? Would there not be in the religious idea an irreducible ideal of a Will which is not the result of judgments, but the cause of them?

But if one does not insist that these needs have produced the belief in God, but that they have preserved it and deepened it, then the emphasis upon this practical side of religion is no longer decisive.

The needs are universal and inexterminable. They are rooted fast in the

ideal character of the inner life, which craves something more than quenching of thirst or of hunger, than protection from storms and foes, something authoritative and superhuman which gives a meaning to life and to the whole world, something which will satisfy the ideals.

The satisfaction of these needs by religion has therefore been always one of the chief arguments of the adherents of all religions. And they have insisted that all the varied impediments caused by religion, its intolerance, its inertia, its hostility to change, are not necessarily connected with it. Certainly the same objections could be made against the state and against law. Even by men who waste little sympathy upon traditional beliefs, it is keenly felt that the empirical reality with no religious postulates at all must

be supplemented in order to be worthy of the best that is in men.

There can be no doubt of the usefulness of religion to give authority to morals, to refine social custom and education, to give certainty to the individual of the significance and purpose of human effort. This is the minimum dilution of religion. But in its completed form even this theory postulates that this world which we know is encompassed in a higher power, which makes the attainment of higher purposes possible.

Is not then so general, so ineradicable a need which is so closely bound up with the most personal feelings of men something normal, and are not the ideals in which it finds contentment just as near to the true nature of things as these needs stand to the permanent character of the human will ?

In fine, can it be provisional and temporary wishes upon which so tenacious and so constantly renewed a fact as religion rests ? If, however, these needs are necessary demands of human nature, then they are rather the way to truth than the way to illusion, unless we conclude that, on the whole, the world seems to us hopelessly rudimentary and without real meaning.

This theory of postulates from the sense of need is not without weaknesses. Thereby we should be forced out of the deepest impulses of our nature to form the idea of a normal Being bearing all in himself, who has all the attributes which can be revealed directly or indirectly to the finite being, and yet who deems it better to allow himself to be postulated, so that men never have to do with himself but always with an idea which they have con-

structed about him. Is not this the natural inference of any one who takes this theory in earnest ? And can it then seem other than one-sided and limited in range ?

The point at issue has really been forgotten : are the religious needs really such as arise as interpretations of historical and natural facts, and are they capable of making and refining the belief in superhuman powers to a religious faith, and are these religious needs, in their inmost core, parts of the actual situation of things, of the bare strife with nature, or of the mere formations of social life ? Or, on the other hand, are there not needs of something that one must have first experienced in order to feel the need ; are they not perhaps fixed in some kind of an experience of an object which first awakens the thought of a final and

infinite meaning of existence, which, in the struggle with the resisting impulses of greed, of sensuality, and of wilfulness, attracts with constantly new powers the better part of the human will to itself ?

In such a case one does not think of amulets or of barbaric rites and formulas of sorcery, of weather-makers, soothsayers, and fetish dealers; one knows too well that they belong more or less to the pathological cases of religion, and that they give us scarcely a glimpse of what occurs within the devotees.

Rather one thinks first of the awakening of one's own religious life, and of those ideal moods and dispositions which one knows in persons and in the literature of to-day. What we seek is above all a basis for our existence, that we should not be alone in the brutal chaos of nature, a certainty of the sig-

nificance of our own life and of the life of society, an intimacy with the Source of all life, in whom the cravings which are not satisfied in this present state of things will come to rest.

Where faith in such a Power exists, all of our most highly developed life with its wishes and needs, its strains and flaws, is brought into a new relation. And every energetic faith stands in a certain suspicious, or even hostile, attitude towards the actual civilization of its day, not so much because it despairs of its own power to realize its purposes in the life about it, but because it wishes something altogether different and higher. Thus in the analysis of the religious need we find constantly something objective from which it proceeds. And this is confirmed in other ways.

The religious need is satisfied by the

idea of the Power which is capable of stilling the desire. This idea, whether imaginary or not, must be taken from experience, and it must be after the likeness of man.

Now all religions, into whose real belief we succeed in getting a glimpse, have in this idea of a Power, which is similar in more or less degree to human nature, the intuition or a definite statement of an indefinitely higher, an infinite, an unconditioned, or of even an absolute, will.

This notion is certainly not taken from the reality of ordinary experience and adjusted to our desires, rather it is an involuntary fact of consciousness, which is experienced under certain circumstances only. John Stuart Mill carefully neglected this factor in the conception of God and occupied himself with the anthropomorphic idea of

the common supernatural theology, which found a characteristic expression in such a man as Paley.

Since this idea was not to be found in experience, it was to him as if it were illusory. He admitted its practical value, but how such an idea ever arose, and from what it was developed, he does not make so clear.

Another confirmation of the objective character of the idea apart from its usefulness is, that religious feeling is never exhausted in the pleasure at the satisfaction of needs which are hoped for on account of the idea of God. The gods are by no means merely the bestowers of what men crave.

The feeling of fear, especially in the lower religions, is often more intense than hope, and in the higher religions reverence is stronger than aspiration. This fact is far from being a refutation

of the theory of illusion, but it is a refutation of the theory that the gods are the products of human wishes, and a proof that an independent and durable idea of superhuman powers existed before the religious wishes.

Feuerbach, in his *Wesen der Religion*, went so far as to seek for what is objective in religion in the terrifying impressions and the great powers of nature. Herein was to be found the belief in superhuman powers, and the religious wish came into play in the form that it sought protection from the whims and the ill-will and anger of the gods, until the gods of terror became transformed into friendly fulfillers of human desire.

To-day the idea of divine powers is recognized not in these frightful and capricious shapes, but as the meeting-point of all human needs and longings.

And the emotion is not terror but reverence and devotion.

This change would not have occurred, if mere fear of imaginary spirits had generated all the forms of religion. There must have been something in the dread of ghosts which went beyond the idea of them and proved capable of assuming other forms.

Feuerbach admits this and explains it thus: reverence is the involuntary poetical personification of the totality of nature, which causes all our joy and all our pain. But is this much more than the concept of an indefinite will, toned down to the maximum of feebleness, but not explained or connected ?

And, after all, is it not just this which, in this form of the total connection, continues to be a stimulant of religious feelings and characters ?

All these variations of the theory of

illusion fail to be consistent with themselves. There always remains some kind of a more or less vague idea of powers to which emotions of fear and attempts to expel the fear attach themselves. Without these ideas the religious wish would not have endured. Some half-conscious idea of a controlling, connecting power gave the support to the hopes and the petitions.

Therefore some involuntary idea must be presupposed to explain the facts of religion. An idea formed by a mere wish, once fixed in the religious worship of animists, could never have maintained itself.

This involuntary formation of the idea, with its emotional and voluntary accompaniments is the basis for Zeller's theory. Religion is explained as being of both factors: of ideas of final causes, and of the needs and longings of the

human heart. The first finds color and power in the second, and the latter a starting-point and support in the former.

Both are so deeply rooted in human nature that there can be no illusion with regard to them, rather a constant deepening and purification, which strips off the imperfections of the original forms. This theory returns to the belief in the truth of religions.

But it clings to a conclusion which attempts to explain religion as a product by men, who are asserted to have built it up by postulates and inferences about the ordinary realities.

The formation of religious ideas is originally the crude, half-conscious causal thought, which expresses itself first in personification of natural phenomena and later in animism and spiritism. Gradually this process reaches

the conception of incorporeal active powers, and lastly the idea of one Energy which governs all mental and material existence.

With these ideas the crude and external feelings of fear and hope and the corresponding ritual connect themselves; then the satisfaction of more refined needs and of moral commands; finally the exquisite emotion of being in harmony with the One Will and of living in dependence upon Him.

The first of these, the idea, arises out of a thoroughly correct habit of thought; the second, the emotion, is the demand of the deepest requirement of life; both, therefore, are an increasing approximation to truth, but, at the same time, both are purely human products, an elaboration of experience, at first barbaric, finally of the highest and purest quality.

But in this theory of Zeller the involuntary character of the formation of the idea is far from being recognized. The historical instance before him must be that of the monotheism of Greek philosophy. This rests upon reflection, like the theism of contemporary philosophy. But all the long development which precedes this monotheism, the personification of nature, the worship of spirits, the refinement of the idea of the gods, is involuntary, without reflection, and is yet real religion. The first, if not the only, monotheism which succeeded in becoming the religion of a whole people is that of the prophets of Israel, and it won its place not by causal reflection, but by the impression of the eternity of the moral law.

It is not so easy to explain how the statement of believers that their rela-

tion to God is direct and real is a deception. The insistence upon any one momentary form or the reference to some traditional revelation by writing certainly may be a case of deception. But against the experiences of a whole people it is not so easily maintained. Similar self-deceptions, such as the ancient theory of the course of the sun, is another kind of experience.

Further, this involuntary nature of the belief in divine beings is not due to the fact that the reflection is subconscious, but to the fact that the object of reflection exists before the judgment is made, in the form of an intuition of, or an impulse to, superhuman beings before its connection with definite ideas. In this case thought is not productive. It mediates between an intuition and the reality, it connects one fact without another fact.

This involuntary process may be explained in one way only, when one assumes that the ideal perception or experience is the ground for the formation of religious ideas. That would correspond with the persistent assertion of religion, which, indeed, in the deepest fervor of the desire for deliverance awaits the fulfilment of its desire in the future, but never fails to insist that its experience of the divine, such as it is, is immediate. That would correspond with the fact that religion arises through the medium of a tradition, which, however, becomes faith, not by impetuous petitions and desire, but only by a peculiar inner experience. Thus the great facts of all kinds of mysticism, the limitation of the religious process to itself, in isolation from all clear effect upon thought, emotions, or voluntary acts, would be explained.

Just as in interrelation with the world of the perceptive organism the picture of the world of the senses arises by an involuntary activity of the soul, so in the same way in interrelation with the same non-ego the experience of God as the inner nature or as the meaning of this world arises also by an involuntary activity.

And both occur at the same time in each other, the experience of God in the sensible world, and the sensible world in an experience of God. The same world appears to us twice in different ways. The difference is great.

Our attention with regard to the world of the senses wavers in very high degree, but our devotion to the experience of God depends upon far more exacting conditions. It is conditioned upon the concentration of attention,

which withdraws from the chaos of the world of the senses and their demands into itself; it is conditioned by the devotion of the will, which subjects itself gradually to the indwelling ideal constraint; it is conditioned by the need of constant repetition, until from very slight beginnings full control over the emotional life is attained.

Thus it would become clear why the need of finding the meaning of life in God requires the repetition of the religious experience. Thus it becomes plain how reflection may attach itself to the experience and interweave with it cruder or sublimer aims of life.

Religion rests then upon experience, partly of the divinity which encompasses our life, and partly in the reaction of the soul towards the progress of other wills; therein it attains new insight into the divine life but in com-

bination with all the flaws and imperfect experiences.

Religion then would spring from revelation, in the sense of an inner experience, such as the experience of the good or the true or the beautiful.

This hypothesis explains the facts of religion; theories of illusion explain less facts; the facts of permanence and universality, but not the psychological and historical details.

The result is then that we arrive at the conception of a very indefinite experience of God, which is far from the concrete clearness of the historical reality to this extent, but the religious experience in its actual character is also far from precise, and describable in no direct conceptual form.

The definiteness is an after-effect of the medium in which the experience

arises, and fixes itself in the memory which easily separates from the inner religious occurrence itself.

We still need then an explanation of these definite religious ideas in which religion fastens itself. This becomes easier in proportion as we bear in mind that the contemplation of God never occurs by itself, but always through the medium of the reality which closes in around us and is actually effective upon us.

It fulfils itself for us chiefly through the medium of the traditional conception of God, but beside this there are numberless things and events which awaken in secondary degree religious emotion. Hence for each person there is a peculiarly individual hue to his own contemplation.

Where there is no conception in rigid tradition or one not yet in its full

growth, the secondary elements assert themselves. In memory the contemplation and the whole associated experience binds itself into the medium in which it arose.

Hence the countless number of conceptual descriptions and recollections of God, among them an endless number of provisional forms, which are temporary expressions; others, because of their effectiveness upon life or the depth of their emotional value, become enduring interpretations of the religious life.

In the case of Christianity the personality of Christ is the permanent medium. Other descriptions are added from the fact that the content of the religious experience, inexpressible in itself, becomes more sharply defined by use of analogies of human life or of the life of nature, which have some

affinity with what passes within the inner life.

Whatever, then, may serve is given the task as a stimulus or as a medium of expression and thus may become a lasting symbol of the vision of God.

All conceivable aspects then, of sky and earth, of mountain range and meadow, of stream and ocean, of plant and animal life; all events of human life, birth and death, dream and clairvoyance, great rulers and departed ancestry, danger and illness, all true or false interpretation of forces, laws, and positions in the universe; all experiences of the beautiful and of the moral law, affect the religious life and become the bearers of the religious idea.

It is the symbolizing imagination which plays this great rôle. Its paltry or majestic, intricate or clear, barbar-

ous or sublime images bind the imagination to the vision of God. One more compact set of ideas, usually given by tradition, acts as a nucleus and gives the direction. Thus, at a certain height of the religious development, it is often the great divinities of the heavenly lights which are the centre of the images of the religious imagination.

Religious life without imagination is unknown. Reflection, in the form of theology, is the herbarium of dried specimens of religious ideas. Great religious geniuses ignore such collecting. Living religion makes its effects in all the varieties of imaginary forms.

The most powerful and the purest stimulants of the imagination are the conscience and moral judgments. Where morality differentiates itself to an independent knowledge of obliga-

tion, it becomes its preëminent medium of expression. The tendency to an absolute standard in morality and the tendency to an absolute standard in religion draw the final purposes of both towards each other, and the social good of experience is transformed into the communion of the soul with the Source of Right.

Likewise with the æsthetic judgments, but in a far less number of individual lines, never perhaps to such an extent as among the Ionians.

It is, then, the whole complicated human life, eluding definition, which gives expression to the religious idea. And we may assert that what we feel as religion must, in some way, have been at the core of the, now incomprehensible, forms of even savage faiths.

In the most ancient religion, or in

the works of the great ethnologists, traces of an ideal faith are never lacking. These traces are by no means moral only. Morality is one element only in the religious idea. There is nothing that may not be a religious symbol. The lower the religion, the more inconstant and inconsistent the symbols. The higher the religion, the more compactly all are grouped about the moral life and bound up with great personalities; and tradition becomes solidified and less fluctuating. This whole world of the imagination need never construct a sharp conception of God. It may produce the sense of an indefinitely sublime Being bound up with symbols and images; and it may desire nothing more than clearness and force in these expressions of the imagination. But the practical needs of the rites, the prayers, and the

usages which attach to them take more rigid shapes and often become transmitters of the tradition. The very highest religions alone feel the lack of a conceptual order of thought and thereby enter into the most complicated varieties of the religious life.

Obviously the awakening of the religious feeling is not simply individual, aroused in each by new media of expression. In a great majority of cases the individual experience is the belief in a traditional vision of God passed on through a long series of intermediary persons. It is reproductive far more often than original.

In productive cases a new overpowering knowledge of God in new means of expression creates a fresh symbol from other analogies and attracts a new set of believers. In lower religions, where the religious emotion is shallow and

easily stimulated from all sides, far more waverings and inequalities of the idea prevail, and the bond of social life is rather the family or political life than the strength of the religious life. Endless variations in tradition and custom which unite the group occur, most naturally, by reason of the simplicity of the religious ideas. But in the higher religions which are more firmly bound to great regulative principles, which can be assimilated by great effort only, comparatively little leeway is left for the independence of the individual.

And the religions which trace their source to definite personalities evidently demand much too great devotion to the ideals which proceed from them to leave much superfluous energy for individual initiative.

Hence the much emphasized social character of the highest religions hav-

ing its ground not merely in the general social impulse, which concentrates itself in rites, but chiefly in the vanishing power of the single person in proportion to the height of the religion. The higher the religion, the greater the demand upon the self-devotion of the individual and the less his ability to produce. In this way the bonds of the religious communions become more firm and durable than any motive to the formation of other social groups.

The essence of the religious ideas is that men live in the belief in the reality of superhuman power.

In this belief is fixed an intense emotional impression which becomes controlling in practical life. The feeling results from the very nature of the religious idea; since the experience of a power governing one's own life and the whole of nature must excite all kinds

of emotions of hope or anxiety for one's own fate and the fate of one's people.

Further than this the experience passes over into a peculiarly religious emotion, the awful realization of an unfathomable, half-revealed mystery. The charm of this mystery is felt even in the most savage religions. It is something that passes beyond the chaffering with values of pleasure and pain.

It plays between the tones of dread and confidence, and vibrates between endless half-tones. Respect, reverence, fear, renunciation, terror, and admiration, gladness, trust, love, and ecstasy play into each other in numberless ways.

The highly wrought religions alone attain to a more definite tone of feeling corresponding to the more definite idea, but even here anything like a

complete harmony is lacking, as the literature of Christianity suffices to prove.

It is, then, easy to show that the religious impulse strives for happiness, or to show that fear in the presence of convulsions of nature, or of an inscrutable fate, or of the future, or of the spasms of conscience and the aimlessness of life is the most powerful of religious feelings.

But all these are rather fragments of a greater and richer whole, which, even in primitive stages, when rightly understood, overtops mere fear and hope. All are concrete attitudes of the self to divine powers. All these attitudes have the practical bearing that out of human fragility, finitude, and sin, a new relation, a harmony, is sought and found.

In each attitude there is the impulse to make this relation permanent, either

in silence and subjection, or in exultant devotion of the whole self. In every single wish and fear this lies concealed, even when the concrete feeling presses forth and seems complete in itself. In the higher stages, and as the mental evolution progresses, this becomes more and more the case; this need of order is the chief source of the desires and cravings.

Herein lies the inexhaustible force of religion, and also the inexhaustible impulse to react upon gods who excite these feelings. Herein lies the impulse to repeat the religious experience, to give oneself up to it and to submit to it, until religion becomes a controlling force, and not a mere transitory stimulus of certain thoughts. Herein is the ground of the rites which are the reaction of men upon the divinity, the solemn celebration of the fixed relation

to him, wherein the religious emotion presses forth to its own expression and strives also to affect the god from whom it springs. This occurs in unnumbered forms.

The naif anthropomorphic idea generates an anthropomorphic rite with incantations which afflict or flatter the god into yielding temper; with sacrificial gifts, to nourish and exhilarate the god until he renounces his vengeance or receives homage; with most varied symbolic acts, dresses, and dances, all of which give utterance to active feeling and permanent moods.

Here, too, the symbolizing imagination has a wide field, using all kinds of colors, tones, times, and places which have any kind of similarity with the religious feeling, as means of expression and means of influence. Even when the service of deeds and morality be-

gins to replace the service of rites, these latter, symbolically interpreted, are readjusted to the new insight.

The socializing influence of rites increases as the religion develops, if not in intensity, certainly in range. The ancestor worship of one clan widens into communions which submit their lives to one supreme social purpose in all parts of the world.

No religion is complete without a common expression of its gratitude and of its aspirations; and in proportion as it fails to communicate the common idea, it drops its adherents, and its life is doomed. Upon the personal faith rests the inner reality of religion; upon rites its propagation and constancy. And only as a social fact has it historical power. The crises in religious history are due chiefly to the fact that the actual inner religious life

does not harmonize with the idea. This becomes too often a memory without direct relation to the will. Religion is degraded to formal assent to statements or traditions, to lavish ceremonies, to materialism and bigotry, becomes the tool of rulers, the game of logic choppers, instead of the freest, most delicate, most versatile and inexpressible of all the activities of the soul.

The whole discussion gives us then psychological facts. And they permit us to treat religion as a unit and to trace the whole enormous mass of apparently contradictory forms to simple sources: the belief in a higher power which gives us what is best in our lives.

As psychological constructions, abstracted from life, they appear dry and brittle, in comparison with infinitely versatile and complex reality. No one of them gives a concrete case in its

purity. Such artificial conceptions, however, are necessary in science, not to replace reality, but to explain it. These general principles then may serve for the understanding of concrete religious facts and for the discovery of the bond which unites the masses of single cases.

The problem of the separate religions in their inner unity remains, not that which collects every detail of the single religions, but that which searches for the psychical forces which give an organization to each.

CHAPTER III

THE FACTS OF HISTORY

THE psychology of religion gives us the general facts which lie at the root of the countless forms of the social religions. It does not show the historical beginning of religion from which all start; the first form of religion, like all the origins of the race, eludes scientific analysis. What little we know is due to inferences and combinations.

Psychology gives the general, permanent basis of the religious facts, which are continually taking new form. We never directly find these psychological constructions; they occur, in reality, in multitudes of complicated

combinations. They never apply immediately to a particular case; rather they mark out the lines within which the historical facts move. The problem then is: how do these general principles apply to the historical religions ?

Answers may be from many points of view. The question is answered by the rigid historian or by the searcher for picturesque historical material as if we had to do with unconnected or accidentally related movements of ideas.

This attitude has been already discussed. But the belief that there is some teleological connection of reality, which is the same as the belief in the normality of our thinking, demands other treatment of religious facts. Some such belief as this must be presupposed.

The question is then: how upon this

basis are the developments of religion to be understood? Fascinating writers recognize the charm of the inexhaustibly rich and vivid details of religious ideas, or even admit the truth that there is a satisfaction of the deepest needs; they enjoy the marvellous poetry, but any serious comparison or interrelation they condemn as bigotry or pedantry. This habit of mind is most useful in specialized work, but useless for the appreciation of the facts as a whole. The æsthetic sensitiveness cares nothing for a consistent attitude towards religion alone.

A more natural attempt to treat religion as independent of other activities is that which recognizes a final purpose, but only as a combination of details of different kinds. A union or fusion of all separate religions in an abstract final form would be the aim

and the criterion, such as Spencer's *Unknowable* or Goblet d'Alviella's *Syncretism*, which unites in one what is common to all. This is certainly a tempting method.

But the result is a very scanty general conception, rather an extremely cautious metaphysical abstraction than a religion with a right to live. The effort expended to produce it seems disproportionately large. Can one believe that so much of the most wonderful religious energy, of the deepest thought and sensitiveness ends in so very modest and vague a result ?

It is certainly another example of the emptiness and limpness of a religion scientifically metaphysical, but lacking in the creative force which a clear and energetic belief in a personal Power generates.

Actual power, as history shows,

springs only from religions which are certain that they see into the depth of a special relation of God. An eclectic and rational religion, or a synthetic faith, breeds a frigid kind of devotee, and dies when the original religious fervor has wasted away. No mental evolution proceeds by making abstract universal conceptions of concrete cases emptied of their contents and stripped of their individuality, but by the growth of some germinating principle, which bears the future in itself and unfolds its full meaning in definite, and more and more apparent, form.

It is then correct when other thinkers turn against this tone of generalization and insist that individualizing must be the method. In natural science general conceptions must be the means and the end of knowledge, but in history, as they maintain, generalizations can

be understood only as they apply to concrete cases.

The aim of historical life should be a constant differentiation which replaces forms less capable of development by more permanent forms of more real capacity. The specific is always the mystery of life, and the demand for life is a demand for details, which gradually sweeps into itself what satisfies its single needs.

Kaftan has applied this principle to the history of religion with beautiful precision, and Windelband discusses it in his inaugural address as Rector of Strassburg. Both of them, of course, assume a reasonable teleological connection of concrete cases; and if the assumption is a belief only, it is a belief bound up with most personal feelings.

Still such a belief is given with the

belief in the normality of human thinking, and this belief is inseparable from personal and historical life. One must believe that reality reveals itself to men in new and higher forms. It must be assumed that knowledge of the course of events is dependent upon one's own desire for truth. One can certainly find out the course of development, but personal attitudes play their part, and such discoveries are therefore never completely accurate.

Any work of general history might serve as an example. There is no ready-made standard of comparison with which one may judge the progress and the goal; just as there is no scale to estimate the growth of mathematics or of any science, except so far as the higher stage is self-evident and includes and explains the lower.

Without a standard, and without a

ready-made ideal, man stands in the midst of ideals and overpowers the lower by the effective power of the higher. In spite of mistakes and confusion, the balance is secured again. Thus in the history of religions one can do no more than to confide in the actual course of ideals and seek the goal where the force of the ideals upon the wills of men, in various forms of adaptation, establishes their authority.

This whole theory rests upon the assumption that the same reason which is valid in the human mind is valid in the universe, and that here as well as there it contains the impulse to unfold its deepest meaning. This conviction is a belief. In religion this belief has a wider basis and inevitable compulsory force. For religion is not a mass of progressing human thoughts and ideas, but a series of divine acts and

revelations. It must rest upon a continual working of the divine thought upon the human thought. If we have to renounce the attempt to know the law of the divine work, it still remains the essence of religion that we believe in a permanent, divine action. All human history is not merely a joining together of human subjective attitudes, but a gradual adjustment of human wills to the divine will.

In non-sensuous knowledge this interchange with a non-sensuous world becomes more evident. The ethic and æsthetical enter unobstrusively into the psychical mechanism and act as higher standards of judgment within the stream of ideas and feelings, but religion brings the single soul into relation with the divine reason, the power which underlies all things.

With the existence of these judg-

ments an intuitive sense of an over-sensuous world of values, which are valid in themselves, is bound up, and thus, in religion, direct contact with the centre of this world is found, and there these regulative principles secure a firm basis as the acts of a personal force.

Without religion history becomes a mass of records of civilizations in which ethical and æsthetic insights prevail, but without any connection with a non-sensuous world, and without a well-founded thought of the origin and purpose of the world.

But in religion, within the texture of history, there enters comparison by the individual of himself with the ground and the significance of reality and of all life, and the conviction is attained that man is not merely the subject of actually existing ideal habits of judg-

ing, and not merely the product of their wide-spread authority in civilization, but that he, with them, is related to an over-sensuous world which he experiences in them, and which is actively engaged in drawing him to itself and moulding him for itself.

For scientific historical writing the movements of civilization are a proper and an easily controlled object, but for a belief in a significance in history the religious experience must be the foundation. Historical narrative of single religious movements rightly disregards these points of view, but any attempt to understand religious history as a whole must accept this attitude, or else maintain that its work is a history of illusions. Its development must be the giving from a divine source, and this gift must progressively disclose itself as the truth of religion.

But there is still another objection to this interpretation of religious history, which is made by the closest observers of facts. They cannot help noticing that in the religions it is not a question of receiving and possessing divine effects which men build into their social life, and thus, in countless ways, remodel it, but, before all else, it is a search and longing for God, an effort and a determination, the final result of which seems to be the great religions.

The religious impulse has often been mentioned, which is said to bring forth the religions. But it is just this word "impulse" which leads us to a right understanding of this fact, which then adjusts itself easily to the previous result of this discussion.

This is one of the words, seemingly clear and simple, which signifies a whole

coil of intricate processes. An impulse is an excitation of the will which, as every other excitation, presupposes a stimulus exciting the feeling and arousing voluntary activity. But in the case of the impulse, the stimulus and the corresponding aim remain half obscured. A half-conscious state arouses the will and keeps before it obscure but deeply felt aims. Impulses play their part in the unconscious depths of the soul. Here the connection of the inner life with the surrounding world produces impulses and directions of aim which drive men to conscious questions about the objects they seek and compel them to a clear knowledge of their own purposes.

Precisely so the religious impulse is the subsoil or the forerunner of all conscious and definite religion which attempts to apprehend the divine com-

munion and comes to rest in the knowledge of what it sought.

It is the stimulus of the inner life, by the divine life which sustains the soul, which pours into it the impulse towards the divine, and which makes its effect in the adjustment of the human to the divine life, just as in all other human impulses there is an adjustment in the unconscious inner life to the surrounding world which sustains it.

One cannot explain these impulses as a mass of acquired or inherited experiences. Instincts, of course, accompany such impulse, but the unconscious impulse has preceded and made the simplest of such experiences possible. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the impulse is only the dim threshold and beginning of definite historical religions; that they always

refer their origin to revelations of the divinity, which arouse the impulse and satisfy it.

In a great religious genius this satisfaction is accomplished without difficulty. And in the social group the impulse adjusts itself to the religious tradition so long as the belief remains unshaken. Where, however, for any reason, the simple belief in the tradition is broken, there the characteristic wavering of the impulse begins, grasping now in haste at all conceivable baits, withdrawing now into itself in mysticism, or taking refuge in foreign and preposterous substitutes, or even trying to demonstrate to itself that it does not exist. These are the opportunities for great constructive religious leaders.

Such crises usually begin in doubt about the actual truth of the religious

idea, due, for the most part, to scientific reflection. In this way another class of objections to the reality of religious history begins.

However much one may be convinced of the practical, non-intellectual character of religion, nothing seems to observation of concrete instances to have had a greater influence upon the growth and the transformation, as well as upon the simplest expression of the religious idea, than mythological and scientific thought.

Progress in religions may often be traced to progress of thought and of knowledge of the world, and every history of religious development is a part of the history of the formation of ideas, their confusions, fusions, and exuberances. History of religion seems to be the history of human theories.

But, in the first place, the parallel-

ism of religious and of mental movements is far from complete, and every careful analysis shows that some simple religious conception is the material for religious meditation, imagination, teaching, or artistic expression. The contents of the religious life are the material, and not the product, of thinking. Thinking, even in its imaginative form, is always the connecting of contents of experience. It is certainly true that the contents influence every moment the connecting activities, and always present themselves in groups and indicate the direction for the organization of new contents. These are widened and combined, or caricatured and confused, or enriched and purified and made permanent by reflection. Human intercourse with the perceived and the non-perceptible world is never without

such comprehensive activity, but reflection is never more than the attempt to group and, by discovery of controlling points of view, to increase the attention and the receptive capacity for fresh contents of experience.

This distinction is decisive for the understanding of concrete historical religions. An attentive reader will always notice the passages in religious histories where the simple facts of religion are described, or where alterations and interpretations are introduced by reflection. In accordance with their theories of the philosophy of history, authors of such histories attempt explanations or insert them into the facts. Some few select souls trace the divisions and the transformations of the religions with perfect accuracy. Oldenberg's works on the Buddha and the Vedic Religion, Rohde's great work, Jean

Réville's exquisite picture of the Roman syncretism, and Mr. Frazer's and Professor Tylor's careful volumes indicate what may be done. Such works are histories, and not examples of the desire to construct historical facts.

In these histories the importance of reflection upon religion receives its full estimate. For religion, by reason of the anthropomorphic and symbolizing character of the religious imagination, is closely related to the mythological, and by its demand for the unconditioned and infinite, to scientific thinking.

By mythological habits of thought, which are not a form of religion, but a general primitive form of thinking, the religious objects are connected with other objects of personifying thinking, and new objects fuse with the former anthropomorphic images and add new,

sharply defined ideas of gods. Priests and poets take possession of these forms. The whole world of ideas is modified. But the first conception, vague, involuntary, not made, nor discovered, close in touch with the religious impulse, is never the same as the secondary forms of priests or of popular superstition.

This mythological thinking never entirely disappears, especially among the classes which cling to the products of the imagination and dissect the religious principle into outer facts and processes. Where, beside mythologic thinking, scientific thinking with its search for unity, necessity, and universality arises, there the effects of thought upon religion are far more decisive.

Scientific thinking has nearly everywhere sprung from religion; the idea of divine powers impels the search for

cosmical connections. The more it becomes independent, the more it reacts, since the ideas of laws of nature and of social life stimulate new religious impressions which refine the ideas with regard to the gods and make them the bearers of general laws.

In the adjustment of the old foundations of the natural religion to the new ethical and more delicate discoveries, the greater part of conscious religious thought is spent. These new religious experiences, which proceed from the new cosmical, moral, legal, or ritual laws, set in motion a whole series of speculations, which play about religion, but never coincide with it.

When, however, scientific reflection progresses to the theory that nature is a mechanism, mythological forms of religion are shattered, and nature cannot transmit any religious impression.

Religious belief dwindles to a vague hypothesis of an infinite unity which gives consistency to a whole. This course of religious life is beautifully shown in the history of Greek religion, beginning with the spiritualizing of the forces of nature and ending in Jamblichus.

It cannot, then, be the aim of the history of religion to find the foundation of religious conviction in scientific evidence. Such a theory can only be valid on the presupposition that religion is a purely human product of civilization. It would be assumed that the first primitive forms of mythological thinking made inferences with regard to religion in fantastic confusion, and that the elements of truth in these attempts have been disclosed by the rigorous methods of science.

This view of the case contradicts

what religion has to say about itself as well as the actual facts. Scientific enrichment and criticism of religion in Greece and India developed religion so long only as they used the old conclusions as points of departure for new. They clung to the belief that the gods are active, and they assimilated to this the new thought they had to offer. When reflection went farther to the building of independent religious systems, these were religious in so far as they used the material which was delivered by the popular faith.

Rationally constructed religion leans upon positive religion. The first combines material into a self-sufficient whole, the second insists upon a communication from outside. The issue between them is the method of treating of the same experiences. In proportion as the productive power of

thinking increases, the religious effect of these ideas decreases.

A correctly reasoned God is not the object of religious devotion. Live religion withdraws into its mystic state of impulses, or is repressed and disheartened by materialistic, hedonistic, or non-committal systems. Sharp thinking can lift and purify religion to a certain degree only; if this limit be passed, it shatters the ideas and other religious growths spring up.

But if religion can never be replaced by science, neither can they be fully divorced from each other. Religion cannot remain uninfluenced by science. Each plays into the hands of the other: the one, a more esoteric religion of thinkers of scientific habits; and the other, a more exoteric of the social forms of religion. Each group acts as a corrective of the other.

Religion strives for an unhampered, absolutely present grasp of its object without any If or But; and masses eager for authority and unaccustomed to the freedom and uncertainty of personal judgment cling with the whole passion of their religious nature to the received ideas and customs.

On the other hand, every careful thinker tries to bring the religious objects into accord with all his other knowledge. In proportion, then, to the energy, the freedom, and the range of thought change is made in the form of the religious ideas. These two attitudes, the scientific and the social, towards religion, are more certain to arise as a religion becomes finer and less mechanical. So long as both equalize each other, the religious condition remains healthy. But if the

tension becomes too great, the form of religion which has hitherto existed falls to pieces.

In this tension between religion and scientific thinking theology obtains its right to existence as a buffer between two forces. Or rather it tries to bring the belief of the religious social body into a tolerable relation with the surrounding culture. But in this process it is likely to modify in some degree the religious objects. It is born of compromise, and bears all the advantages and disadvantages of a compromise, now too near to ecclesiastical machinery, and now to pure science. The churches cannot dispense altogether with it, nor can they long endure a single form of it. It clings to science and yet is not science, but an application of scientific principles to ecclesiastical purposes. Nowadays the discord

between science and religion seems to have become less harsh.

In consideration of all that precedes, it is clear that religious history may be regarded as a whole, that there is no religious life which is not the result of supersensuous power in the form of the stimulation or satisfaction of impulses of will. And historical research cannot discover in each religion the divine activity, for that is an object of will-attitude and not of science. But it is content to leave the actual facts to rest upon themselves, and not to struggle to deduce them from other facts. In this way it becomes easier to believe in a progressive revelation of God in history, and to believe that the special features of the religions are parts of a whole.

Individual peculiarities in the great groups form a comparate series, in

which the character of religion differentiates itself more clearly, sharply, and deeply. And this series depends upon the operation of the divine life.

CHAPTER IV

THE VALUES AND THE STANDARD

WITH the establishment of the right to believe that religion may be treated as independent of other forms of life and that the different religions are comparable parts of a whole, we come to the crux of religious science: the problem of arranging them as a series with reference to a standard of comparison, a series which would give us some kind of a scale of values. It need not be repeated that we have no ready-made scale.

How, then, ought one to attack the material, as endless as the material of the natural sciences? How can one fix

the common marks in the multitude of variations and bring order into the confusion ?

A grouping of the religions by common race or by political unities, or by other limits of space or time is certainly the most natural step towards the simplification of the task, just as natural sciences construct special laws for single parts of nature. We should thus deal in the lives of countless men and women with common ideas, feelings, attitudes of will, common changes from one group of emotions to another group. In the great masses of religious bodies there is no considerable difference in the leading ideas, in the kind of emotions, in the rules for religious acts.

How far might it be right, following the method of natural sciences, to continue this grouping, and to include by induction constantly wider masses of

facts under more general laws? There is no doubt of the success of this method in the case of natural science. Might there not be the same success, if an attempt were made to discover common psychical facts and connections in widening tracts of the religious life of past and present mankind?

The difficulty is at once apparent. Natural science attains complete definiteness in its most inclusive laws, because it can fix calculable relations of quantity. But how can one attain a similar exactness in psychical sciences which have to do with a vast extent of disparate mental states and connections?

Concrete cases we have: for example, the psychical experience of the devout Athenian at the time of the Persian invasion, the pride in his city, the joy of living which this pride in-

fused in him, the idea of the goddess and of the gods and heroes who had protected the metropolis from the beginning of its days. This we can make vivid to ourselves. Likewise with Israel at many crises.

If, however, we attempt another step in the induction, what is common to both ? In both cases we have a compact national life and a lofty patriotic pride, in both cases an idea built by the imagination of a cause or causes, which work invisibly with more than human power, and in both cases a trust in this active power. The process is familiar. But are these common marks of the same kind as the common facts which are established in the inductions of natural science ?

What we obtain is a list of undefined general terms: a people, a national feeling, a superhuman causality, and a

trust. But the issue is how these terms correspond to inner processes, or how the objects correspond to inner processes, which could have definite meaning to us. When we speak of national feeling, one must feel that it corresponds to something definite in us. And this is absolutely necessary in practical life and also in science, if it is to have any value to us. The value is real to us only so far as we compare the imagined inner process with an experience which has been a part of our own inner life.

If there is a difficulty, it is because of the richness of the feelings which are active in us. When we speak of national feeling it means a most complicated inner state. The remembrance of what the United States has represented hitherto in the history of civic equality and of popular education, the

memory of Washington, of Hawthorne, of Sumner, the thought of the intellectual and æsthetic and political degradation of masses of our citizens and of the present efforts to humanize them, the knowledge of the mistrust of our motives with regard to Cuba and the Philippines, and hundreds of other intense experiences—all this, in clear, individual expression is what our national feeling might mean to-day.

Are we, then, to call all this into consciousness in order to complete the conception of patriotic feeling? Certainly not, for when our own patriotism is immediately present, all the actual situation, upon which the feeling depends, need not be present. We abstract from the whole list certain aspects which are in more direct relation to a hypothetical, typically expressed situation and fix them in our

consciousness. We imagine how we should react, if the nation were insulted by foreigners, or if there ever should be real need of a war.

In this hypothetical experience we can construct the inner processes for each one of these situations. And after abstraction of details, the inner process which is called patriotism is still present to us in definite shape.

This is very far from being a general conception of natural science. It is a conception for comparison for the purpose of understanding a foreign experience. We can thus measure the patriotism of a German, for example, by a comparison with this conception which is abstracted from our own patriotism. This patriotism of his is bound up with a mass of historical, and therefore individual, attitudes. This historical aspect I can imagine, but

cannot keep present in consciousness except in fragments.

We are limited then to fixing in some form an outline of our own national feeling, and then, later, to make clear by comparison the difference of the German's in certain definite situations, to discover how, under the same circumstances, my patriotism, similar though it be, would react in a different manner, or how, under the same conditions in which I actually am, or in which I imagine myself, the patriotism of the German would react differently from mine.

This conception of comparison indicates how the inner process of another may be hypothetically repeated in myself upon the basis of my own inner processes. It makes inner life, which is strange to us knowable, by giving us a clue by which we may hypothetically

live ourselves into the same. This clue, a definite inner process of our own, is the foundation for our repetition of the process strange to us.

This foundation, however, in case of exact hypothetical repetition of the strange life, must be modified in different single features.

In daily life we use quantities of conceptions of comparison of just this kind. They rise into our minds in countless numbers whenever we read a historical book. We take up the first book before our eyes and we read in Bismarck's *Autobiography* of his annoyance and indignation at Gortschakow's forcing him to pay for the numerous telegrams from the Russian Foreign Office. A mass of conceptions of comparison break out within us as we recall similar vivid inner states when we ourselves were in other lands.

If, now, we apply this result to two cases in religious history into whose inner life we wish to penetrate, it will be necessary for us to revivify the memory of those inner experiences of our own which are most like theirs, and we must reproduce these processes in more or less modified form with regard to each one of the religions.

Or, in general terms, we may say: in natural science the inductive method aims at forming a connection between many facts or occurrences by proving that calculable relations of quantity prevail between them, which relations reoccur in many other cases ; but in the science of religion, induction is compelled to make a connection between many other cases by arranging those which are similar with regard to a conception of comparison, as clearly de-

fined as is possible by hypothetical repetition.

Proceeding now with this inductive method to religion as a whole, we compare the common traits of all religions.

We fix, by means of a standard of comparison or a group of standards, such an inner state of our own or our hypothetical experiences, from which we may start when we wish to put ourselves in the spirit of any other religion.

Suppose we start with a conception of religion as an inner experience in which the struggle for life, in face of impassable limits, strives to find satisfaction with the help of a power which gives the highest good. What would be the meaning of this conception? So far as it has any religious meaning it must take a personal form. If it is to help me to reach the religious attitude of any strange religion, the strug-

gle must be felt as my own struggle, the life must be one with a definite series of incidents for me, the limits must be thought as barriers to my own efforts, the satisfaction must be attained by the thought of a causality which reveals the highest happiness within my own self.

In all these inner experiences the experience is individual, and bound up with personal feelings of self. But the connection of such experiences with the individual self is by no means common to all religions. In many of them personal feelings are repressed so far as possible, even to the point of extermination. The feeling of limitation then would have a decidedly different meaning. In fact all the inner processes which have been mentioned would have different bearings in other religions.

Hence, when we try to penetrate into the will-attitudes of another religion, it cannot be by a single reproduction of our own individual experience, but by a comparison of the individual qualities of the religious processes which we are trying to understand. Suppose it be granted that such a method gives precision and vividness to our understanding of other religions. Would the objection be valid that it is a good practical procedure, but undisciplined and therefore unscientific ?

Would not a scientific method consist just in this, that it omits the individual aspects of one's own experience which have been obtained by standards of comparison such as are in daily use, and that it reproduces whatever in our own experience remains ? We should make use of the conception of comparison by reducing it to what is the

same in the different cases with which it is compared. This would be a return, as a matter of principle, to the ideal of the general conceptions of natural science.

It must certainly be admitted that forms of psychical life are the same in all men, although developed in different degrees of fineness. The conviction that the race is a psychical unity leads us to this conclusion, and also the fact that it is impossible to make the inner lives of other men comprehensible on any other supposition. Further than this, we do as a matter of experience understand the lives of other men upon the basis of this assumption.

Wherever the inner processes, which we define in our conceptions of comparison, are those sensations, emotions, and efforts which arise out of the im-

pressions of the external world upon our bodily organism, we may assume an identity between the kind of these inner processes in others and in ourselves. When we feel thirst or hunger, and cold or heat, we need not have conscientious doubts whether others feel as we do under similar bodily conditions. There are then tracts of inner life, which so far as they concern conceptions of comparison, may be treated as identical, as much so as if we compare them by rules of natural science, with the only exception that we start from our own experience.

Whenever, however, we enter those inner experiences which are the life of the real subject, his desires, his wishes, his purposes, his reflections, his decisions, his enthusiasms, his pleasures and pains, his joys and hopes and expectations, his attentions and imagina-

tions, all that affects his self, all that brings him into intercourse with other men, the whole situation changes.

This life is history, a gradually unfolding quantity of relations of inner lives. The share in this life is proportional to the richness of the individual inner life in its reactions upon the multitude of impressions from other individuals. Here conceptions of comparison are constantly arising in order to estimate the individual qualities of the unexplored inner lives of other persons.

If we approach that activity of the inner life which is religious, the individual attitudes become enormous and the conceptions of comparison indefinitely great. There are such extreme discrepancies from our own attitude as the Buddhist with his renunciation of individual desire, or as the believer in priestly authority who believes in

gods because of confidence in other men's conceptions of comparison. Conceivably, one might rule that these are not strictly religions, as natural science rejects from a certain group all phenomena which do not conform to the laws which prevail in that group. But what would be the gain ? Are not all other religions full of individual points of view ? And if these be eliminated, what would be left ? The alternative would then be either sharply to define each religion, giving it its individual values, which are far from coinciding with the values of other religions, or to allow the conception of comparison to become so vague that it becomes worthless. There is then no possibility in the comparison of religions, so to arrange the conception of comparison that it contains only what is everywhere identical.

One possible evasion of the difficulty there might be. The confusion might be thought to come from the complexity of the conception of comparison, due to the highly organized character of our own inner processes. Might the method be more successful if we substitute for our own experience an experience as simple as that of the Indian of the Vedic period, who joyfully entreats Varuna for the dark rain and promises in return the sacrifice ?

The scale would start with the most elementary form and progress from a fixed historical point. But is it so sure that, because these religions are the simplest, they would be comparable in all respects to intricate forms ? Would there not be individual aspects of the desire for life, of trust, and of the other subjective attitudes, which would differentiate them from any other re-

ligions? Would there be any use for a conception of comparison?

Definite objections prevent the use of rudimentary religions as standards of comparison. It would be by no means easy to make completely clear the peculiar inner processes of such a religion, just because our life is so far more intense and reflective and so more extended in its causes and effects. Before such could be a standard it would itself need to be explained. Another objection is the difficulty of deciding upon any one particular religion when once one's own is discarded. One fixes upon the Vedas, another upon the Sumerian, a third upon the Bantus and their fetishes, or upon the totemists as the simplest form.

In any case, then, there would be disagreement about the particular conception of comparison which would be

applied. But this difficulty is common to all sciences which treat of will-attitudes in any but purely psychological terms. If these conceptions lead us to inner processes which we ourselves experience, the contents will differ in proportion to the varying complexity and varying depth of the inner life.

We take up a book of subtle insight like Maurice Maeterlinck's *La Sagesse et la Destinée* and try to interpret what he means by "*bonté*" or "*douleur.*" We are sure that the inner life which these words symbolize is of different quality from any that most of us have felt with any permanence or intensity. And all the wealth of our own life and of our share in others' lives does not exhaust the full significance of the words. The conception of comparison betrays its variability. This uncertainty is never completely destroyed.

One can only expect a certain unity of conceptions of comparison, by which we make our inner life intelligible to others, among persons of similar education, who are in active exchange of mental products. However, not only compulsory intercourse, but the thought that there are standards for the inner life which are valid for all men, equalizes differences of training and therefore differences of conceptions. Not satisfied with the fact that a certain unity has established itself among men, we ask what is the right life, the normal life, the perfect life. It need not here be inquired to what extent the thought of universal standards controls men, and to what extent within human life a region remains where individual inclination and the power of natural impulses is supreme, and where universal

standards have no authority. It is enough to state that standards actually control a wide territory among men, that moral standards are recognized without exceptions and enforced to the point of the penalty of death, that the sense of beauty is opposed to individual peculiarities of taste, and that true knowledge is contrasted with perversions of fact.

Likewise in the religious life the conviction prevails that one form of religion must be the true, the right, the beautiful, and that this religion should be contrasted with others. Whatever be said of the right of these convictions to existence, they are certainly useful to procure unified conceptions of comparison.

If there are standards which are valid for the inner life, recognized as normal in great tracts of human society, they

are more fit than the wavering state of actual opinion to be applied as the criteria of the different concrete cases.

Instead then of adopting any kind of an elementary religion, or the present state of our own religious life, which in its imperfection often appears to ourselves as foreign, we choose as our point of departure that form of religious life which, according to our own conviction, is normal, and which we are striving to make real in our own inner life.

Thus we free ourselves from the aimlessness and futility of the conception of comparison, and we express in the clearest possible outlines a standard of comparison. From this point we proceed to understand the forms which differ from it, and we proceed to give to the facts their values. In this way religions may be arranged in a scale. And their rank in this scale would be

determined by the answer to this question : are the characteristics of the standard religion clear and controlling in the single religions ?

This conclusion that religions are comparable with reference to their agreement to a norm will be met with distrust from more than one side. One might fear that the concrete religions would be stripped of their historical character and trimmed down to normal abstractions. But rather the contrary is the case. The thought that the characteristics of the normal religion are nowhere present in equal completion, purity, clearness, and force would tend to emphasize the peculiarities and lay bare all the individual imperfections. A general concept of science would be far more likely to ignore or violate historical facts.

Another objection is weightier: that,

since the standard religion is the complete religion of our own conviction, we should substitute the Christian religion. But certainly a part only of students of religion believe that the Christian religion is the complete religion. Many representatives of the science of religion substitute some modern religion, or, like Renan, some individual æsthetical revelling in subtle thoughts as the perfect faith. The scale of values is changed, and universality, the mark of science, lost. But that need be no ground for despair of success in coming to an understanding.

As the Christian religion frees itself from accretions and increases its intensifying of the moral life, more serious persons will submit to its influence than ever. And the admission that it is the complete religion may also come from those outside its life, who hypotheti-

cally live themselves into it. And, in the second place, even if there be conflicts with regard to the standard, there may be common scientific work with those from whom we dissent. In spite even of conflict we may learn from each other. I may compare their conception of complete religion with mine; I may appropriate their results and interpret them into my own language. I can calculate how the relative position of certain points from one point of view seems to change when a point at a distance is taken by another observer. The procedure becomes extremely complicated. But, after all, is it so very uncommon? Does it not happen whenever we read with insight a book written by one from whom we differ or by one into whose attitude towards life we must project our imagination? The task becomes easier

then in proportion as each one speaks out clearly and describes the standard towards which he himself is working.

In spite of these objections, then, one may insist upon ranking religions in conformity to a conception of a normal religion. The object of the science is the religious life of humanity. Religious science shares in all the difficulties and all the dignities of the other normative sciences.

A classification of human knowledge with references to these sciences might make the result which we have reached more clear. The first group would consist of all sciences which consider events in time and space, in measuring size, duration, position, and degree, in discovering causal relations which may be described in definite numerical quantities. By the establishment of such

laws we make our world into a scientifically measurable world.

A second group would discover yet other laws beside causal laws, laws which rearrange facts with reference to the adjustment of parts to a whole. Every whole is regarded as an end to which a series of events works together. Events are classed in so far as they aid or obstruct this end. When this conception of purpose is applied to nature the whole arouses not only our desire for knowledge but our interest and sympathy. We rearrange nature with reference to our own interests.

A third group brings us to the inner life wherein we take attitudes towards all that is causal or suited to a purpose. We compare the endless variety with our own self. We judge each detail with reference to a standard higher than ourselves. All the countless ob-

jects which mankind in the course of history has found to be of worth, we ourselves estimate with regard to what we deem precious for our own life. From the higher point of view we judge them with reference to the standards by which we decide what the complete inner life must be which ought to be realized concretely among men. Thus we attain to a scale for human values.

It is a special case of this last class when we measure the different historical forms of religious life by comparison with that which belongs to normal religious life, or, more accurately, with that which, in our conviction, is characteristic of the full, harmonious religious life.

If this method be applied in the science of religion it ought not to seem a strange procedure. We are perfectly familiar with it in popular usage. Out

of what we know of religious life in our own experience we decide what in the life of humanity deserves this name, and this we never succeed in doing unless we make some kind of a scale.

If it be objected that this popular method should be discouraged and repressed and that religious science must give up any attempt to work with arrangements of a normal kind, the answer is that there is a science which, by nearly universal acknowledgment, must proceed in the same way,—the science of ethics. One could scarcely maintain that one ought to construct a general conception of morality, to be obtained by induction, which should combine the common factors out of the chaos of moral intuitions of different times and races. If, however, it be asked, what is the characteristic of

morality as the result of the normative method, the answer is more clear. The conviction that there is a law for willing and acting and the acknowledgment of its unconditional validity would be the mark of moral life. And inner processes which submit to this law become moral facts. With the thought of such a rule of action, known to us in our own inner life, which we acknowledge, not to obtain satisfaction of our impulses and inclinations, but to subject our life to a law of obligation, we venture into the confusion of the history of morals. We cannot expect to find this thought clear and distinct in all periods of history. It is concealed or polluted by thoughts of other laws, by threats of punishment, by custom, by loss of social popularity. And the feelings which accompany the thought of the law, guilt, shame, remorse, ex-

altation, are rarely found unmixed with other feelings.

But the moral thought does free itself from the competing thoughts, and the moral feelings do conflict with hostile feelings; and whenever we find voluntary subjection to a law loftier than mere balancing of pleasures, we may speak of morality. Whenever this is the case, a scale of historical morals may be made.

If this method be applied to religions, or rather to a particular religion as normal, must not all the characteristics of that religious life be included in the conception of the norm ? Would it not otherwise be emptied or crippled ? Would not the thought of the normal religion become lost in indefiniteness ? Would not one, after all, be forced to return to an induction of different religious beliefs ?

This latter, certainly, would not be a successful method in the comparison of morals. If we assume that Christian or Greek morality is that which we have made our own ideal, one would not describe details. Rather one limits one's self to a few characteristics, or even to one which gives it its distinction over other systems. And this might be found by an analysis of our conception of the normal moral life, an analysis which should contrast it as sharply as possible with other activities of our own inner life. If a single definite thought indicates the peculiar nature of what is moral, all we have to do is to fix this clearly and describe its meaning within our own life. It is enough to know that there is the thought of a law which is higher than impulse, and to show that our personal feelings of obligation connect themselves with this law.

Just so it would be with the religious life. We analyze what is present to us when we experience, ourselves or hypothetically, what is to our own conviction, the complete form of religious life. By comparison with other activities of our own life we try to bring clearly to mind characteristics of what is passing within us. It is the significance to our own life that we need to know. The result would be that one idea would separate the inner processes which are given us in the highest religion from the other processes of our inner life. These processes would be under the control of one thought of a power which can supplement the imperfections of our experience and realize for us our own highest and most personal aims.

The aim in this method, then, is to state in the most concentrated form

how the inner activities of the religious life are distinguished from the other functions of our life, and thus to bring to mind one clear thought which should give the key to the particular meaning of all those processes.

With this thought well in hand we apply it as a standard, asking, in the first place, how, in the normal religion, the facts of the religious life are different from, or rather similar to, other normative activities. What has the religious life in distinction from the ethical, the æsthetic, the logical activities? All these different problems attack us as soon as a historical religion is examined. One asks to what extent is the normal formation of religious ideas discernible in this religion; to what extent is the religion separate from theories about the world; is æsthetic emotion severed from re-

ligious feeling ? With the solution of these questions the scale of religions begins to build itself up on the basis of the one concentrated thought.

In the second place, within the religious process itself, a cluster of peculiar emotions, voluntary activities, and ideas group themselves about the central thought. The analogy of moral life shows us the way. The limits of morals are clearly defined by the thought of a law, the acknowledgment of which as our own law raises us above the flood of impulses. But the task for ethics remains to make clear what are the numerous inner processes which are under the influence of that one thought: the feeling of personal dignity, of self-respect, of responsibility, of regret and guilt, of conscience and moral resolve.

Likewise in defining the idea which

controls the religious life, a great variety of actually or hypothetically experienced inner processes which accompany it present themselves: the emotions of trust, of reverence, of devotion, of obedience, the conception of a divine order of the world.

A mere description of the peculiar religious or moral life which is under the influence of the one central thought, the description of an actual historical situation is very far from being the end of such an analysis. Any distinct content which could be given by perception must be rejected. It is the form of inner activity that we seek clearly to define. If we were trying to secure a conception of the inner activity which we call knowledge, we ignore the different objects of knowledge; we attempt no description of schools, or literature, or of the press.

We try to make clear by comparison of what we ourselves experience, what we mean by the activity we call knowledge. We compare different degrees of the knowledge, opinion, assent, and proof, and the feeling of doubt, uncertainty, and conviction. We try to reproduce the conditions of social psychology under which knowledge develops. Thus we discover what we do and experience, or what the normal scientific thinker does when he accomplishes a mental act guided by a wish for truth.

If we are to understand the moral life in its perfection, we should not describe the contents of the moral law, nor the particular actions commanded under certain conditions, nor the condition of society which we should recognize as ideal. Rather we should contrast activities under the moral law

with other inner activities. We should try to understand what we do when we experience a standard, or an objective moral law instead of individual rules or motives, or personal aims and the highest good. We should make ourselves more aware of the meaning of guilt, repentance, and other moral feelings. We should investigate the psychical processes upon which a moral society rests: respect, moral indignation, moral self-reliance, moral authority and education.

Analogously, knowledge of normal religious life is secured. Description of historical facts, or of all the wealth of concrete life with its tasks and insights into suffering and joy, will not lead us to the central fact. One must abstract from all objects of reality which are perceptible. It is not the content but the activity that we need

to understand. What do we do when we think the central religious thought of a Power beyond ourselves which satisfies our highest needs, and when we acknowledge that this thought is true ? What do we do when we bring into consciousness the activity which finds the relation of our most personal needs to a causality beyond the experience of the senses and submits to Him as the completion of our own personality and as a supplement to the imperfect order of the world as we now know it ?

Further we should find some light upon the other activities which are more or less bound up with the controlling idea: the feeling of self, the effort for more life, the arrangement of inner values, the judgment of value, the belief in a final order of the world. Apart from any historical form one

would try to understand the significance of religious trust, of reverence, of certainty, of the devotion of self to the highest purpose, in their union with the idea of God. Religious trust, for example, in its Christian form, would be the glad certainty of the reality of a Power which assures me of the accomplishment of my highest purposes in spite of flaws in the order of nature beyond the control of my will.

And, finally, in the highest stages of religion the common experiences of a religious society dominated by the thought of God are to be defined. What is a revelation, a religious tradition, an authoritative faith ? How is faith propagated and how are religious customs extended ?

As a result we should have a highly abstract conception of the normal religion. The advantages of this abstrac-

tion over a description of the most complete religion in all the fulness of living detail would be that the peculiar characteristics would be more sharply distinguished from other sides of the inner life. For all clear definition is abstraction. And, furthermore, the normative form of the conception would be more fit to be used as a standard with which other religions might be compared.

Suppose now that the norm is present in our minds and we feel its authority, ought there to be any place for the suspicion that the norm may be something visionary or fantastic, a beautiful possibility, but unreal and unpractical ?

The answer is that the norms must be accepted upon their own evidence. That there should be truth, and right and beauty and holiness is absolutely beyond any explanation. The fact is

simply accepted. I may trace the history of their prevalence among men; I can describe the fact that men do judge themselves and others by them; I may treat them as facts of psychology to be analyzed into sensational elements. But just why these particular psychical processes should have authority; why these norms ought to be selected to have authority over the whole stream of consciousness and all the acts of life; why the normal conscience requires that certain things should happen which are not happening, and rejects what is actually occurring, this we cannot and need not explain.

We can say nothing more than state the fact that men do feel responsible. Is it not folly to ask whether it is right to be virtuous, or true that there is truth? As a matter of fact we do make ourselves responsible not only

for will and deed, but for thought and feeling. And a complete man reproaches himself for errors of thought and offences against good taste, not less than for moral laxity. He recognizes duties for his thinking and his emotional life as well as for moral life, and he is ashamed and pained when he violates any of the norms. He acknowledges a law to which he is subject and he knows that the worth of his deeds depends upon the fulfilment of that law. The obligation to conform to the laws of logic, if one wants truth, is the most generally recognized of the norms; the moral obligation, if not so universally acknowledged, is usually more intensely experienced, to the point even where transgressions are punished by death.

These " laws " which we find in our logical, æsthetic, and moral conscience

offer no explanations of facts and are not themselves explained. They assert how facts must be that we may approve them as right, true, and beautiful. They are not laws stating observed sequences of events, but standards or ideals according to which the worth of what happens in causal connection is judged.

The religious norm insists that our present experience is supplemented by a higher experience. The obligation passes beyond our present limits. Our ideals, our norms, our highest values are for it not merely abstractedly possible fulfilments of our present selves, but facts of the very highest reality, facts also to a normal experience of an individual who selects for himself an experience which fulfils his own plan.

Our relation to God is the most real relation of all, a continual expression

of thanks and delight. He is the only One whom we wish permanently to imitate. This imitation is the religious norm. It is the deepest part of us, far below philosophy and custom.

It is the half-conscious impulse which becomes a practical and verifiable certainty that our highest ideals may be attained, that the highest possible claims upon nature, upon society, and upon ourselves are, after all, in some mysterious way, required of us, and that these ideals and these claims are laid out upon an infinitely vast scale, in which our own experience and the experience of mankind about us now is a provisional and rudimentary step.

This norm, then, is a standard for our judgment when we wish to supplement our own experience, or the collective experience of our fellow-men in a universal form. In proportion as we

feel keenly the clash of ideals and the lack of things which ought not to be left out, in proportion as our dissatisfaction with ourselves as we are becomes genuine, and the egotism of our highest self becomes intense, in proportion as our claim for more significance for human lives becomes firm, we shall know that a Power which is eternal is calling forth in us that which revolts against a dull and languid life with small hopes and small demands upon life. We shall then be capable of hatred for the flaws of life, and of exultation in God.

When once the norm is constantly in our thought, then the knowledge of the different kinds of beliefs given us in history doubles in value, both for intensifying our insight into the norm and into the inner life of historic religions. One's own experience of the

highest is the point of departure. What is lower in one's own real or hypothetical life is classed with regard to the highest form known; an inverse classification would not give such clear or accurate results.

It has been a common prejudice of scientifically trained minds that our self in reflection upon its own real or supposed experience, when bringing a mass of concrete details into consciousness, can empty itself of all personal feelings and purposes and remain, by a slight strain of attention upon the given contents, a purely reflective activity.

This opinion has given place to the reflection that the self, when it considers its own states, past, present, or hypothetical, is still a living self. Its point of view must be from the midst of a complicated state of individual

attitudes. This is most clearly true in cases wherein we reflect upon past incidents in our own life, it may be, upon some despondent mood of another period. At that time, when we were in the experience, certain motives and insistent feelings were immediately present. But when we now recollect, we discover that there were other grounds for our melancholy, grounds of which we then were scarcely aware. How can this be? Not because we now, with more concentrated attention, have discovered the true grounds of our sad state, but because our self now comprises a new content of ideas, emotions, and purposes. Either a content of consciousness which we formerly had may have been recovered after loss, or an entirely new content may have been assimilated under new condition or with a new con-

trol of our life. In some such way the self has won a new position for analyzing the past event. By comparing the new content with that which, by hypothetical experience, we have recalled from the past, we discover reasons for the mood which in immediate experience altogether escaped us. Not only our personal life has changed, but we have passed through new experiences which fit us to reproduce in ourselves by imitation experiences of others which would have been before incomprehensible, fit us to understand others as well as ourselves.

Just this same method we apply to research into remote forms of religious life. One analyzes the forms of religion which one acknowledges as the complete form either in one's own life or in some other experience, in order to discover the standard.

The hypothetical living into the situations of other men gives new points of insight into the complete experience. And from this point of view one brings to one's mind more clearly the distinctions between the religious and other similar activities of the inner life.

Acquaintance, then, with different historical forms of religious life is required in order to make firm one's grasp upon the standard and for the constant expansion of one's own religious life, not in order to accumulate material for large generalizations, but that one may allow one's self to go on to new points of insight into other lives and into the depths of one's own normative life.

In this way one seeks for the secret of another's life and one finds a part of one's own life, and one finds the secret of one's own life, and it is the part of

the life of another which has long been sought.

In such cases what is sought is a part of what one has already found, and both link us to God, who is revealing Himself to us, and us to each other, and what is best in us to our own selves.

THE END

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